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REAGAN WELCOMES ARGENTINE LEADER

Renews Attack on Nicaragua — Alfonsín Calls for Talks and Nonintervention

By GERALD M. BOYD
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 19 — President Reagan welcomed the President of Argentina to the White House today, an occasion that Mr. Reagan used to renew his denunciations of the Government of Nicaragua.

"The free people of this hemisphere must not stand by and watch the Communist tyranny imposed on Nicaragua spread to the free lands of the Americas," Mr. Reagan said.

His comments on Nicaragua were in contrast to President Raúl Alfonsín's opening statement about the Sandinista Government, in which he stressed the need for "dialogue" and what he called a "longstanding principle" of international law in Latin America opposing intervention.

"I am convinced that it is through dialogue that we will be able to reach peace," the Argentine leader said in a speech on the White House South Lawn.

Seeking Support in Congress

The Reagan Administration is seeking support in Congress for \$14 million in "covert" aid for Nicaraguan rebels, who are trying to oust the Sandinistas.

Mr. Reagan's remarks on Nicaragua came in the context of a strong statement on democracy, a form of government he said 90 percent of the population in the hemisphere either lived under directly or were in transition to.

"This trend, however, is threatened by Marxist-Leninists who continue with the heavy support of the Soviet Union and Cuba to undermine freely elected governments and democratic movements," Mr. Reagan said.

Mr. Alfonsín arrived here today on a trip that will be highlighted by an address Wednesday before a joint meeting of Congress and discussions on Argentina's lingering economic problems, which include an 800 percent inflation rate.

Mr. Reagan asserted that the Sandinistas now in control of the Government had been only one faction in a broad coalition that sought to overthrow the dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle and restore democracy to the country. But instead of restoring democracy, they seized control of the "organ of power," the President said.

"The Nicaraguans are joining the ranks of the freedom fighters," he said, referring to the insurgents, whom he has called the "moral equal" of the American Founding Fathers. "Nearly three times as many men are fighting the Communists right now as the Sandinistas had fighting Somoza before they seized power."

Unable to Provide Figures

A senior Administration official later was unable to provide numbers to support Mr. Reagan's assertion.

Mr. Alfonsín's visit comes at a time when Argentina is holding talks with the International Monetary Fund about meeting economic targets to qualify for additional loans from the agency. The two leaders were believed to have discussed the idea of the United States providing a \$500 million bridge loan until I.M.F. funds are forthcoming.

Mr. Reagan said at the welcoming ceremony that the United States "will do what we can to assist" Argentine in efforts to improve economic conditions. But he provided no specifics, nor did a senior Administration official who briefed reporters.

Mr. Alfonsín said his Government was "ready to govern with the austerity that the times are demanding, making the necessary adjustments to overcome the obstacles in our economy."

"But we cannot make adjustments that would actually impose sacrifices on those who have less," he cautioned.

'Heartfelt Frustration' Seen

The senior Administration official, who briefed reporters on the private discussion between the two leaders on condition that he not be identified, said he thought Mr. Alfonsín had tried, through his comments, to underscore his difficulties in imposing austerity measures to overcome a foreign debt of about \$48 billion.

"My impression was that it was a very eloquent, heartfelt frustration with attempting to tighten belts and how far you can go," the official said.

Although United States financial aid to Argentina is minimal, it does influence loans and other aid from international lending organizations and private banks.

Mr. Alfonsín expressed some backing for the Administration's Central American policy in his public remarks by saying he supported "pluralism" in Nicaragua without intervention from another continent.